

The Umpire

By H.G. Salsinger

IN ANNOUNCING that the local Negro base ball season will be inaugurated at Briggs Stadium on Sunday, June 3, with a double-header involving the Homestead Grays of Pittsburgh, and the Elite Giants of Baltimore, John R. Williams, who is promoting the event, comments:

"In recent years Negro base ball has become increasingly popular throughout the country and in several cities the attendance is equal to that of professional white teams. Negro businessmen have become interested in the sport and are investing heavily in its future.

"Chicago, New York, Pittsburgh, Washington, Baltimore, Memphis and Kansas City, are metropolitan centers where Negro base ball has gained a firm foothold. Those cities are represented in the two Negro 'major leagues' and their teams are profitable ventures.

"Negro ball players today receive salaries equal to those paid in the high minor leagues. Consequently, there is a future for the Negro player who is able to make good and he is not particularly concerned whether or not he is admitted to white organized base ball where restrictions and formalities might prevent him from performing in his own inimitable and carefree fashion."

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Unrestricted

WILLIAMS makes a major point in the last paragraph. The Negro, playing in a white man's league, would have to conform to set standards of play. He would have to subdue his natural bent and inclinations. He would be robbed of the characteristics that distinguish him from his white contemporary. Without spontaneity, his main asset, the Negro would be just another fellow in uniform. Says Williams:

"If Ole Satchel Paige, most famous of the Negro players, were pitching for one of the white major league teams, do you think he would be permitted to call in his outfielders with the bases loaded and proceed to strike out the side, as he frequently does?

"Do you think that Josh Gibson, the 250-pound catcher of the Homestead Grays, would be permitted to hold up a game while he addressed the crowd and informed all present over what fence he intended to hit the ball?

"Do you think that the fleet-footed Martinez of the Cuban Stars, would be allowed to steal second while the catcher held the ball, and steal first base on the next pitch, as he so often does? For one thing, the rules wouldn't permit his favorite act.

"Speed, daring and mirth are the God-given characteristics of Negro ball players, who play the game for the fun there is in it."

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Common Sense

WILLIAMS offers the soundest argument for all-Negro

base ball that we have encountered in sometime.

Negro players would gain nothing financially by joining white teams; they can do much better for themselves playing in Negro leagues.

Old Satchel Paige, for instance, has made more than twice as much money pitching for Negro clubs as he could ever have made pitching for a white team and Paige can be favorably compared with any white pitcher of the last 25 years and more.

He could never be subjected to the rules and regulations governing white players. Ole Satch does what he pleases, goes where he pleases. An incurable nomad, he is ever on the move. He jumps contracts, misses engagements, recognizes no training rules or jurisdiction of any kind.

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As It Is

IN ITS present makeup, Negro base ball is becoming more and more popular and as it increases in scope and affluence it will not be long before the Negroes will be able to build their own parks in leading cities and compete with the white major leagues for patronage.

On a Sunday last year, when a Negro double-header was staged at Wrigley Field in Chicago while an American League double-header was being played at Comiskey Park, the Negro games outdrew the white by four or five to one. The Negroes cut so deeply into the Comiskey Park gate receipts that an official protest was filed and the Cubs were asked not to rent their park to the Negro clubs, permitting them to run counter attractions.

Negro base ball lacks the technique and finesse of white base ball, but it is more entertaining because it is spontaneous and in some ways unorthodox.

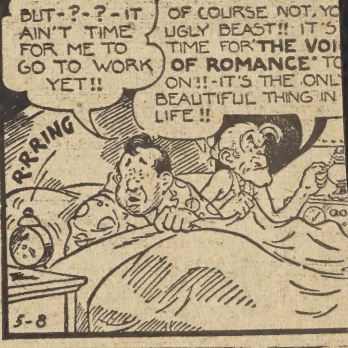
Last year we asked the owner of one of the leading Negro clubs why he did not hire some of the retired white players to coach his team and he said the Negro players wouldn't stand for coaching by whites; that they wanted to play the game their own way.

Negro base ball is as distinctive as Duke Ellington music. To merge Negroes with whites would destroy the individual style that is their main asset.

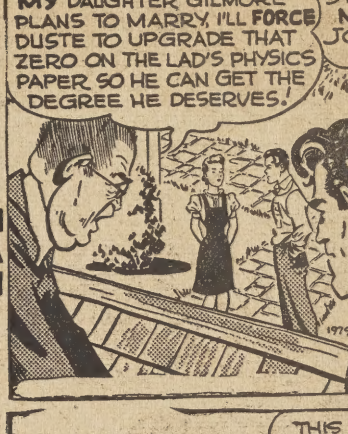
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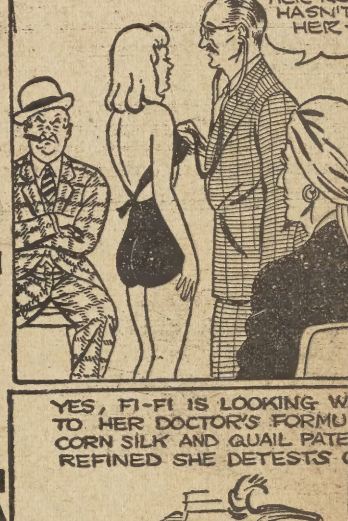
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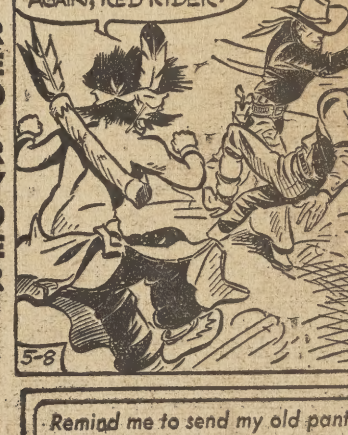
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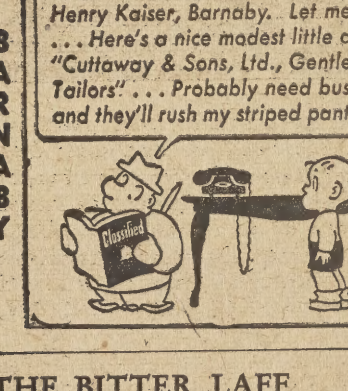
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